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PETER AND ÆSOP

ECLOGUE

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PETER AND ÆSOP,

A ST. GILES'S ECLOGUE.

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PETER AND ASSOC.



A ST. GILES'S COLLEGE



# PETER AND ÆSOP,

## A ST. GILES'S ECLOGUE.

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..... Arcades ambo,  
Et cantare pares, et respondere parati.

VIRGIL.

..... Blackguards both,  
Prepar'd with Lie for Lie, and Oath for Oath.

Tutius est fictis igitur contendere verbis,  
Quam pugnare manu.

Why risk the danger of a broken Pate?  
You're safe within the pale of Billingsgate.

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PETER AND ESSOP

A ST. GILES'S EPILOGUE





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## P R E F A C E.

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EVERY one conversant with the Literature of the day, and which, from its superior excellence, there is no doubt will continue to be the Literature of many ages to come, must have been highly delighted with the exquisite perfume, the poetical Attar of Roses, with which PETER PINDAR and the AUTHOR of THE BAVIAD have, to their mutual gratification, and the gratification of the public, besprinkled each other.

That we might “not lose one drop of these immortal men,” I made an excursion a few days ago into the parish of St. Giles’, for the sole and express purpose of collecting a few scattered flowers which, I was told, these distinguished dispensers of poetical panegyric had been lately throwing about at random. These flowers it has been my business to weave into a chaplet, to ornament

A



ment their respective brows ; and which, I trust, are of that amaranthine nature, as to continue for ever in unfading beauty and lustre. With these I have intermixed others, taken from their own hot-beds.

There were some, indeed, of such peculiar fragrance, and of such indescribable delicacy, that I thought it better they should “ waste their sweetness on the desert air,” than run the risque of being injured by a removal.

To speak more plainly : PETER and his Opponent are equally unknown to me, but by their writings. To their talents, of which no man can think more favourably than I do, I am ready to do homage ; but I must ever express my disgust, or be permitted, at least, to laugh, at the miserable, not to say beastly, use these irritable men make of such valuable endowments.

In the selection of an umpire, the opponents seem to have looked instinctively towards that profession in which every man, who chooses to assume the privilege, considers himself a sort of licensed blackguard, at liberty to be as abusive and scurrilous as he pleases. It is a privilege, however, which the more liberal part of the profession seldom or never resort to. Those who  
do,



do, are compelled to it, I presume, from mere poverty of invention, not being furnished with better arguments. Nothing can indicate a baser or more cowardly mind, than to attack where there is no opportunity of defence. This vicious habit seems to have originated from a very prevalent custom amongst the tiros at the Bar, of beginning their career, as I suppose SCURRA to have done, at the Old Bailey and other places of that description.

The character of SCURRA, so perfect in all its parts, is not, the reader will conclude, copied from any single original; but, like the Venus of Apelles, is an assemblage, collected from the multitude at large, of every thing requisite to make it a finished piece. SCURRA, therefore, is not to be considered as an individual, but a species; a species, which, for the credit of the Bar, and of general society, is extremely rare; so rare indeed, that many have doubted whether ever two of this Phoenix race flourished at the same time. Let it be observed, however, that if there be any one pre-eminent blackguard, whom the finger of public contempt and indignation points out as the most impudent, lying, unprincipled, cowardly scoundrel in existence, he has my unrestricted permission to appropriate the whole of the character to himself.



PREFACE

do, are compelled to it. I presume, from more poverty of resources, not being furnished with better arguments. Nothing can be done but to be more cowardly, than to attack while there is no opportunity of defence. This vicious habit seems to have originated from a very prevalent custom among the poets of the day, of beginning their career, as I suppose, Goussier to have done, at the Old Bailey and other places of this description.

The character of Goussier, is perhaps in all respects, as good as the reader will concede, copied from any thing original; but like the Venus of Apollo, is an excellent copy. From the magnitude at large, of every thing, nothing is made a hundred times. Goussier, therefore, is not to be considered as a rival, but a friend; a friend, which for the sake of the art and of general society, is extremely rare; to say the least, that many have doubted whether ever two of the French poets flourished at the same time. I am to be allowed, however, that if there be any one prominent figure, without the help of public contentions and insinuations, it is not at all impossible, that, unaided, it could be as effective as the aid of the public contentions is to it.



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# PETER AND ÆSOP,

A ST. GILES'S ECLOGUE.

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IT chanced two rival bards of high renown,  
Whose wit malignant long had tired the Town,  
Met in the modest purlieus of St. Giles;  
Where, interchanging first farcastic smiles,  
They greet each other in alternate metre: 5  
Æsop the one was call'd, the other PETER.

B

PETER.



---

PETER.

They tell me, Æsop, thou'ft the vain ambition  
To bring thy rhymes with mine in competition.  
Now hear my challenge ; let us each relate  
Our mutual praises in pure Billingfgate.

10

ÆSOP.

Does PETER think I, who, with taunt and gibe,  
Have put to flight the DELLA CRUSCA tribe,  
With him in wordy warfare wou'd engage,  
On him wou'd lavish my poetic rage?

PETER.

Thou put to flight the tribe of DELLA CRUSCA !  
I much suspect thou'rt of the tribe of MUSCA.  
Thou fly upon the chariot wheel ! dost hear ?  
If any thing restrains thee, it is fear.

15

ÆSOP.



ÆSOP.

Than honey gall shall be accounted sweeter,

PETER sing psalms, when I'm afraid of PETER.

20

Know then, thy challenge I accept, vile brute !

SCURRA, my friend, shall settle the dispute.

PETER.

Agreed: the brother blackguard well I know ;

SCURRA's thy friend, and cannot be my foe.

Line 20. PETER *sing psalms, when I'm afraid of PETER.*] PETER's perseverance in abuse evidently proceeded from an opinion that I feared him. This was an idea which had never struck me, and which, indeed, I could not hear with patience, when it was first mentioned. Fear ! No. Never in my humblest moments did so unworthy a thought possess me as that of being suspected of fearing so feeble, so odious, so contemptible, so utterly despicable an object as PETER PINDAR.—GIFFORD'S *Introduction to his Epistle to PETER PINDAR*, p. 13.

Line 24. SCURRA's *thy friend, and cannot be my foe.*] Qui non odit  
Bavium amet tua carmina, MÆVI !



Than SCURRA, had they search'd the world around, 25  
A fitter umpire no where cou'd be found.  
Learning, nor liberal arts, nor taste refin'd  
Had pour'd their radiance o'er his vulgar mind.  
His Latin went no deeper than his skin,  
No deeper than his father flogg'd it in. 30  
But tropes of Billingsgate he studied long,  
And all the beauties of the vulgar tongue.  
His was the learning of the Bow-street gang,  
St. Giles's Sanscrit, commonly call'd slang.

A prostitute of law, he set to sale 35  
His talents first in Newgate's murky jail.  
Diving from cell to cell, you there might see  
SCURRA to felons cringe for paltry fee;  
Solicit custom from each rogue and whore,  
Deep drench'd in infamy, or stain'd with gore. 40

The



The triple tree in fight, and lost to hope,  
He makes them flip-knots for the hangman's rope ;  
Nor needs his friend, SAM CROSSLEY, to supply  
The well-drill'd witness, or the alibi.  
He pleads for murder now, now private stealing, 45  
And with each cut-purse has a fellow-feeling ;  
Feeds on the reliques of the pilfering day,  
And shares the plunder of the King's highway.

Thus nightly plies, for less disgraceful gain,  
His sister prostitute along Hedge-lane ; 50  
Takes to her arms the thief without a shirt,  
Wallowing in infamy, disease, and dirt.  
Chance brings the cully with an extra crown :  
Enrich'd, she buys clean linen, and a gown.  
Her old associates proudly left behind, 55  
And older rags, that flutter'd in the wind,

With



With charms new furbish'd, and new painted face,  
She flies to Covent-garden, or King's-place,  
Flaunts in the face of day, such fashion's power !  
The favourite strumpet of the passing hour. 60

Thus, with the dirty gains he had laid by,  
Or what, perchance, HIS STRUMPET might supply,  
See SCURRA next to Westminster repair,  
Where now he breathes a somewhat purer air :  
And yet no purer he ; he still retains 65  
His Newgate character, and mental stains.  
With no perception of the moral sense,  
Chicane, and cunning, lies, and impudence,  
Old Bailey eloquence, and Compter wit  
Proclaim for what the miscreant is fit : 70  
Contractors, swindlers, Jews, he takes in charge ;  
'Those thieves and plunderers that walk at large.

An



An honest man retains him to his cost ;  
SCURRA your advocate, your cause is lost :  
Tho' right and justice swell the crowded sail, 75  
The current of his mind defeats the gale.  
With all the scoundrel lurking in his eye,  
He hesitates a truth, and looks a lye.

Talents his envy, worth his scorn and game,  
The vile affassin of your well-earn'd fame 80  
With libels, lies, and insult, wounds your ears.  
(Alas, no Custos morum interferes !)  
Redress your injur'd feelings might demand ;  
No manly candour hope at SCURRA's hand.  
Tho' hot his insolence, his heart is cold, 85  
As meanly timid, as his tongue is bold.  
Hint your resentment to his private ear,  
His base heart palpitates with palsied fear ;

The



The ebbing life-blood quits his coward cheek,  
His tongue, no longer bold, but strives to speak ; 90  
The unsteady eye forgets its pert elation,  
And his nose tingles by anticipation.  
No spark of manhood agitates his frame ;  
He fears chastisement, but he feels not shame.  
In short, his mind is tainted to the marrow : 95  
Such is the faithful portraiture of SCURRA.

(Think not my pencil, SCURRA, at a stand ;  
As yet I've touch'd thee with a gentle hand.  
Then thank me for the lenity I've shown :  
When next I strike, I'll bare thee to the bone, 100  
Thy scare-crow, in terrorem, to exhibit.  
The cat-o'nine-tails oft precedes the gibbet.)

But to return : The mob had form'd a ring,  
In which they had their choice to fight or sing.

The



The champions, with their umpire, enter in. 105

Come, cries the flippant gentleman, begin.

PETER.

At life's first outset, in a cobbler's stall,

'Twas thine to use the paring-knife and awl.

Thy awl was pointed, and thy knife was keen ;

Nor keen, nor pointed, is thy wit, I ween. 110

ÆSOP.

While yet an infant, at thy mother's breast,

Deep in the nipple were thy fangs impress'd :

Line 107. *At life's first outset, in a cobbler's stall.*] Master ÆSOP GIFFORD some years ago actually was a cobbler in the little town of Ashburton, in the county of Devon. No young man was keener in his profession than little ÆSOP with his paring-knife in his hand—in short, he was the cobbling wonder of Ashburton and its vicinity.—*Postscript to Crim. Con.*

c

Her



Her agonizing shrieks were thy delight ;

Thy great amusement not to suck, but bite.

PETER.

Thy very eyes at enmity we see, 115

To look the same way they can ne'er agree ;

Hence all things seem to thee, thou squinting elf,

As twisted and distorted as thyself.

ÆSOP.

'Twas thine, when with thy school-fellows at play,

To prompt them first to mischief, then betray. 120

Murder to thee had been a deed of fun,

And what thou dar'd'st not do, thou wish'd were done.

Line 115. *Thy very eyes at enmity we see.*] Little squinting Æsop, &c.  
—*Postscript to Crim. Con.*

PETER.



PETER.

Ashburton first was witness to thy fame,

CRISPIN thy faint, and ÆSOP was thy name.

Thy stall, the theatre of thy renown, 125

That proud Lyceum of thy native town!

Cook-maids thy cobling institution grace,

And grooms (the Bond-street loungers of the place,)

And young MATHIASES, and such-like folks,

All crowd to hear thy poetry and jokes. 130

Line 125. *Thy stall, the theatre of thy renown.*] The portraiture of St. CRISPIN being represented with a crook-back, and squinting eyes, was often supposed by the apprentice-girls and stable-boys of the town, who were accustomed to lean on his bulk to hear his poetry and jokes—I say, this homely portraiture of the tutelar faint of coblers was supposed by those his companions to be a likeness of himself.—*Postscript to Crim. Con.*

Line 129. *And young MATHIASES, &c.*] Little Mister MATHIAS, the son of a cobbler (says fame), nevertheless a rhyme-monger and critic, &c.  
---*Postscript to Crim. Con.*



## ÆSOP.

As hops to WADDINGTON, to RUSBY corn;  
 To CULLUM butter, cabbages to HORNE;  
 Coals to GEORGE HANGER, or as fish to SCOTT,  
 Who sweep the markets, buying every lot;

So

Line 133. *Coals to GEORGE HANGER.*] It is highly reprehensible in Æsop to mention, in the same breath with known regraters, fore-stallers, and monopolizers, the name of a respectable merchant, of great spirit and enterprise, and a good man (I mean upon the Coal Exchange), for the base purpose of unjustly exciting against him the suspicions of an irritated Public.

Were Æsop to be prosecuted, as I think he deserves to be, for such unprovoked defamation, it would require all the abilities of his friend SCURRA to screen him from the indignation of an English Jury, and that punishment which awaits an infamous libeller.

The extent of damages that might be sustained, whether in purse or  
 honour,



So are the indecencies of life to thee,

135

Thou grand monopolist of infamy !

honour, it would be difficult to appreciate. It is much to be doubted whether, after all this, Mr. GEORGE HANGER will ever be Lord Mayor of London, or even arrive at the Shrievalty. ÆSOP, in no one instance of his life, ever betrayed greater malignity, or at least obliquity of mind, than in thus insinuating that a gentleman, whose character is so well known, would condescend to be that odious thing a monopolist ; a despicable wretch, who accumulates property, carefully hoarding it up, that it may be used to better advantage in times of scarcity and distress, when it is most wanted ! So far from entertaining any such scoundrel sentiment, I am confident, were he to get possession of *the coal* to-day, it would be no fault of his, if it were not all consumed by to-morrow. And so confirmed am I in this opinion, that, were he to be prosecuted under the statute of monopolies, (and there is no knowing how far the audacity of hireling informers and qui tam gentlemen may carry them) I shall be ready, whenever I am called upon, to be his bail, to the UTMOST EXTENT OF MY WHOLE FORTUNE ; that is to say, in a sum, not exceeding the profits—of the present publication.

PETER.



## PETER.

A different office must on Æsop fall ;

Cater he may, indeed, but can't forestall.

When to the fair he breathes the amorous sigh,

With loathing spurn'd at, this his soft reply : 140

" Since Æsop you reject, then take his Lord!"

A most convenient pimp, upon my word!

## ÆSOP.

With every virtuous sentiment at strife,

How horribly monotonous thy life!

Line 141. *Since Æsop you reject, then take his Lord!]* Master Æsop GIFFORD has performed in several characters since his elevation from his stall at Ashburton, having been created a Petronius, the arbiter elegantiarum, &c.—*Postscript to Crim. Con.*

Line 144. *How horribly monotonous thy life!]* The horrible monotony of such a man's life, &c. &c.—GIFFORD'S *Introduction*, p. 19.

On



On all the good what joy thy filth to fling, 145  
But chiefly on the friends of Church and King!

PETER.

Poor PARSON NARES's still-born pious prose,  
As well as BELOE's rhymes, in sweet repose

May

Line 147. *Poor Parson NARES's still-born pious prose, &c.*] Have I been known to attack poor Parson NARES's still-born pious prose lucubrations, or BELOE's rhymes?—I scorn to insult the dead. Have I ever spoken disrespectfully of the critical sagacity of Messieurs RIVINGTONS, (two booksellers of St. Paul's Church-yard) and their reviewing ladies? I scorn to trample on paralytics.—Have I ever attacked the military character of Mr. FRANCIS RIVINGTON, whose sword is as sharp as his pen, and who is ready to storm the loftiest dunghill of the metropolis with as much intrepidity as was displayed by the commanding general at the battle of Jemappe! I have seen him on the plains of Bridewell, in his accoutrements, out-Alexander Alexander.



May rest for me ; I war not with the dead,  
 Nor yet wou'd trample on the palsied head. 150  
 For me, bold RIVINGTON may bounce and hector,  
 The dung-hill's and the green-stall's proud protector ;  
 Impress the daring pick-pocket with fear,  
 Or turn his flank, or thunder in his rear ;  
 Exhaust his tactics on the rabble rout, 155  
 And march, and counter-march, and wheel about.

## ÆSOP.

Some Power that deals out mercy to the dull,  
 Must, certainly, have RUMFORDISED thy skull ;

Alexander.—I have seen him bayonet pick-pockets at a fire.—I have  
 witnessed his undaunted appearance, and maintain, that he will be as  
 formidable to his foes in the field, as he is terrible to a poor peti-  
 tioning, complaining, emaciated author in his shop, or to those  
 drudges the scavengers of his Review.—*Postscript to Crim. Con.*

How



How cou'dst thou else produce thy half-crown strains,  
All cook'd with just three farthings worth of brains? 160

How

Line 159. *All cook'd with just three farthings worth of brains?*] On mentioning this fact, which is here stated with such minute and truly philosophical accuracy, to a learned friend of mine, formerly *Œconomiae fardengensis* Professor at a celebrated University on the Continent, I could not forbear adducing it, with some degree of national vanity, as a singular instance of intellectual œconomy. He smiled at my ignorance, and assured me, there were many splendid works which were sold, or, more properly speaking, were exposed to sale, at ten times the price of any single production of PETER's, and which were cooked at no greater expense than PETER usually bestows upon a trifling hash. Nay, indeed, he boasted, as he is sometimes apt to do, that he himself had prepared a very great and scientific entertainment, sufficient to satisfy all the learned Societies of Europe, at a still less expense.

Shocked at the blameable extravagance he has observed, since he came to reside amongst us, in this, as well as some other instances,

D

he



How else, the public cou'dst thou hope to please,  
And feast a parish with a pint of pease?

PETER.

he is preparing for the Press a short appropriate Essay, of not more than 690 pages, on the Œconomical Expenditure of Brains\*. His manuscript, a sight of which he has indulged me with, has deeply penetrated me with shame, not only at my ignorance, but at the recollection of my former thoughtless extravagance; having, in more instances than one, lavished, in dressing and dishing up a single Epigram, as much of this invaluable commodity as some of our new-fashioned mental Restaurateurs would expend upon a Poem three times as long as SPENCER'S Fairy Queen. Every material is not, however, to be ope-

\* There is a valuable Treatise printed in the year 1736, on the Œconomical Expenditure of Fuel, and the Rumfordising of Fire Grates, translated from the French of Gauger by Dr. Defaguliers. The title of the original work, the substance of which has lately been reprinted, though without reference or acknowledgement, if I mistake not, for Cadell and Davies in the Strand, has this title: Fires Improved: or, A new Method of building Chimneys so as to prevent Smoking; in which a small Fire shall warm a Room much better than a large one made the common Way. And the Method of altering such Chimneys as are already built, so that they shall perform the same Effects. By Monsieur Gauger. Made English from the French Original, by J. T. Defaguliers, LL. D. and F. R. S.

rated



PETER.

Parnassian rag-man ! on boil'd pease her diet,

With flatulence, not fire, thy muse runs riot.

Old

rated upon alike : the produce of a clay-pit and a gold mine must be differently treated, it requiring a much more glowing and intense heat to fuse and refine an ingot of gold, than to burn a clamp of sixteen, or, I might say, eighteen thousand of bricks. I am, nevertheless, no advocate for pushing the refining system to an unprofitable excess. Were PETER, for instance, to try the experiment upon one of his own pigs, (I speak metallurgically and metaphorically, not with any personal allusion,) though I will admit they contain, with all their impurities, a reasonable proportion of sterling ore, I should yet doubt whether his produce and expenditure would not be in an inverse ratio, namely, half a crown's worth of brains to three farthings worth of pure metal.

Many opinions are entertained respecting the present scarcity of the article in question : some maintaining that the country does not pro-



Old clothes-man to the Muses, nay, no man,

165

Thou letter'd pin-cushion of scraps and bran !

ÆSOP.

duce enough for its own consumption ; and, in support of their assertion, ostentatiously refer you to the monthly returns, regularly made out by the brain-weighers, or brain-meters, (I am at a loss for the proper term) the Reviewers. Relying, indeed, on the documents furnished me by my friend, Dr. R. GRIFFITHS, the principal clerk of the market, I think this opinion is not without its weight.

Others, again, attribute it, as they do all our calamities, to the war; bringing into their calculations not only the brains wasted in planning our Secret Expeditions, &c. &c. but what have been actually knocked out in carrying them into execution. To this opinion inclines my friend the Profeffor, who will undertake to prove by Algebra, if called upon, that had the brains which have been thus irretrievably lost to the community, been properly œconomised, their value in produce (half a crown's worth of produce for three farthings-worth of brains being the datum he calculates upon) would more than pay off the National Debt, fix times over ! Should this calculation be, as I  
doubt



## ÆSOP.

Much more thy fatire than thy praise delights,

It soothes and tickles most, when most it bites.

And

doubt not it is, reasonably accurate; I think the Minister ought to be impeached, who does not immediately put all the brains, that are not already usefully employed, into requisition. Should this be thought too revolutionary an act, they ought at least to be bought up for the use of Government. I have indeed heard it hinted, that something of this kind has been done already; but as no proofs of such purchase have yet come to light, the public would do well to suspend their judgement. So far I can aver; nay, I am willing, if required, to make affidavit before the Right Honourable the LORD MAYOR, that I have never once been applied to by any one of his Majesty's Ministers, all of them my most intimate friends, for a single grain; notwithstanding, they well know I am one of the greatest stock-holders, not to be a monopolist, on the Literary Exchange; that my article is of the most marketable quality; and that I am ready to contract with them for almost any quantity that might be called for. Provided I could make only one

contract



And yet, tho' highly favour'd by thy muse,

Thy doggrel verses I could ne'er peruse ;

170

But,

contract on the same terms, quality for quantity, that some others have done (to mention names would be invidious), my fortune would be made. I should then be the richest contractor in this or any other kingdom. " My palaces would rise like exhalations."

For my own part, I am inclined to believe that the kingdom contains quite enough of this necessary article, but that, like other necessities, such as coals, corn, hops, and even money, it is become a monopoly, or at least is in too few hands, or rather heads—but whose I presume not even to hint at. This business calls loudly for Parliamentary investigation ; and I hope it will be the first legislative act of the Imperial Parliament to limit, as in the case of the Flour and Bread Company, each person's capital and rate of interest. But it will be necessary first of all to pass a resolution of the House to exclude from the privilege of voting on this question all known or suspected monopolists. But here a dilemma presents itself I am not equal to. If any of the Representatives from a sister kingdom can assist me in taking this bull by

the



But, of thy kindness that I might not doubt,

"Some damn'd good-natured friend" would point it out.

Damn'd

the horns, I will thank them. As the purity of our Members of Parliament, like that of CÆSAR'S wife, is not even to be suspected; and as their delicacy is, at least, equal to their purity; it is to be feared that so many may withdraw themselves, merely to avoid illiberal suspicion, that the House will be left in that singular situation, in which the SPEAKER may say to the MACE, or the MACE may say to the SPEAKER, "Nos duo turba sumus. Now the monopolists have retired, we two make the whole of the Imperial Parliament!"

Line 162. *And feast a parish with a pint of pease.*] Much as my friend, the Professor, condemned PETER'S prodigality of brains, he highly approved his parsimony of pease. But at the same time, with the true jealousy of a projector, he would not allow him the merit of the first discovery; assuring me, that the original idea of such cookery was to be met with in a publication of his own—"Though, to be sure," added he, "I doubled the quantity of ingredients, calculating upon two pints to a parish of the extent of St. Giles's; and this I did not only in compliance with



Damn'd pleas'd, be sure, was I to hear the whole,  
Most damnably well pleas'd, upon my soul!

PETER.

with the deep-rooted prejudice of the vulgar, but the more deep-rooted of the learned; one of whom, an eminent physician, and distinguished member of the Royal Society, had the absurdity to tell me, that unless I allowed five hundred times the ingredients I first thought of, namely, one pint to a parish, I should leave nothing to be done by the physicians. It was in vain that I told him, so long as there was water enough in the composition, all other ingredients were superfluous, no other way necessary than to colour and flavour it. You, perhaps, do not know (he proceeded to tell me) that water is not only the vehicle of nutriment, but, bona fide, solid nutriment itself?" After having said this, and staring me in the face, for the purpose of spelling through my pocket-handkerchief (which at that time I pretended to be making use of) those marks of wonder and admiration which he thought my countenance must betray, he gravely added, "Nothing can show greater ignorance or perversity, than to deny the solid nutrition of water. Does it not serve as food for plants and trees, which, without the aid of any thing more substantial, are produced from the smallest seeds, and fed till they attain a monstrous degree of corpulency?"



PETER.

Nay, since it pleases thee I'll give thee more ; 175  
 Some precious morsels yet have I in store.

Who

lency? Will it be denied, then, that the noble animal Man, whose assimilating powers must be infinitely more perfect than that of beings which (though they may have, according to the demonstrations of DARWIN, sense and sentiment) are without even a loco-motive faculty—Can it be denied, I say, that Man can appropriate to his sustenance the same food that an oak or a cabbage can? If I had time," continued he, "I would prove that gases, as much as the essence of adamant, and the chemical compounds of mercury and other salutary poisons, are possessed of nutritive properties. If there be nourishment, then, in gases, water surely may be considered as a luxurious and enviable diet."

It is but common justice to observe, that PETER has the best claim to the value of this discovery; it having descended to him, with other family secrets, from his lineal ancestor, PINDAR of Thebes.

That PINDAR has written very copiously on this subject, was a fact.

R

formerly



Who reads thy Baviad must thy Mæviad love :

Thy muse who hates not, may thy life approve.

This

formerly known only to the Learned, that is to say, to myself, Dr. ———, and perhaps one or two others ; but it is not now concealed even from the Vulgar, “ the Great Vulgar,” I mean, who visit the Pump-room at Bath, who have now the opportunity of perusing the whole of his invaluable Treatise. The words are these : *Ἀριστον μὲν ὕδωρ* : which I thus translate, happily combining, as the critical reader will perceive, the pregnant brevity of the original with the scrupulous fidelity of modern translation : “ Water is the best and the most nutritious aliment that can possibly be admitted into the craving stomach of a hungry man.”

☞ Dr. ———, whose well known experience on a point of this kind ought to have its weight, may insinuate, perhaps, that I translate from the French. I despise the insinuation.

Line 163. ———*On boil'd pease her diet,—With flatulence, not fire, thy muse runs riot.*] I believe that I may have asserted that there is so much



This question solve: Which is the viler imp,

The literary swindler, or the pimp?

180

ÆSOP.

much flatulence in those compositions, that his muse, previously to her beginning her song, must have made a hearty dinner upon boiled pease, a vegetable possessing much flatulent energy.—*Postscript to Grim. Con.*

Line 165. *Old-clothes-man to the muses, &c.*] I have, I confess, ventured to speak my thoughts of that rhyming humbug The Pursuits of Rancour, alias Literature, the united composition of the aforesaid gentleman and Lord ———. I may have called them the Ragmen of Parnassus, the Old-clothes-men to the Muses, Literary Pin cushions composed of scraps and bran.

Line 167. *Much more thy satire than thy praise delights.*] It has been my good fortune, in company with others infinitely my superiors in talents and worth, to attract, for a long series of years, the scurrility of “a wholesale dealer in doggerel rhymes,” known by the nick-name of PETER PINDAR. As I really considered his abuse as a tribute to my little, my less than little, merit, I received it, as became me, with modest silence, and made no boast of the satisfaction it gave me.



## ÆSOP.

Which of these titles most provokes thy gall,  
 (Unless thou art belied, thou know'st them all),  
 Blasphemer, flash-man, perjur'd priest, or sot?  
 This question too I must not have forgot—  
 A brothel-keeper's was not once thy station?  
 That lowest step of human degradation!

185

On the appearance of "The Pursuits of Literature," this PETER grew more elaborate in his scurrility, and I more pleased.

Frequent and furious were the thrusts aimed at me from the bye-corners of every Newspaper, Magazine and Review, into which he was permitted to creep. None of them reached me, as I have already observed; or, if they did, it was merely to tickle.

Line 180. *The literary swindler, or the pimp?*] I may have said, that when a man receiveth subscription money for a work, and without any intention to produce that work, he is a literary swindler, and deserveth the rope; I may have asserted, the dirtiest of all occupations is a pimp. But what is all this to ÆSOP?—PETER's *Postscript*.

SCURRA.



SCURRA.

Adjourn, adjourn, for Westminster provide;

Superior Judges must this cause decide.

I plainly see there ne'er can be an end on 't,

Till each shall plaintiff be, and each defendant.

190

There's ground for actions in a court of law;

I will myself the declarations draw:

Impartial KENYON'S cool discrimination

Shall give to each his proper compensation.

PETER.

The law shall be no law to lawless PETER;

195

Revenge of any kind is surely sweeter.

Let us then fight it out.

ÆSOP.

Agreed, agreed.

SCURRA.

Hold, hold, and ponder first the dangerous deed.

Were



Were either kill'd before his legal time,

The other's death must expiate the crime—

200

So KENYON says, and what he says is law.

ÆSOP.

Then Prudence dictates, we had best withdraw.

PETER.

Dull dog, to sacrifice at such a shrine!

Prudence shall be no deity of mine.

No puling fear my fix'd resolve shall alter ;

205

I'd freely die, to purchase thee a halter.

Measure let KENYON only give, for measure,

Tho' death I dread, I yet shou'd die with pleasure.

To it they set, with blows, and kicks, and tugs,

Cross buttocks, flying mares, and Cornish hugs.

210

Line 210. *Cross buttocks, flying mares, and Cornish hugs.*] Technical terms in the tactics of the Gymnasium.

SCURRA



SCURRA now strove to part them : well he knew,  
He too might hang, if murder shou'd ensue.  
Unluckily he fell ; and, in his fall,  
Snatch'd at the combatants ; down tumbled all !  
Besmear'd with mire and dirt they struggling lay, 215  
And tofs'd about, and floundering stopp'd the way.  
Their legs at length regain'd, they silent stood,  
For once transfixt with shame, three images of mud !  
To the surrounding mob these men of worth  
Afforded inextinguishable mirth ; 220  
The rabble shouted, all St. Giles's swore,  
That three such blackguards never met before.



Scourge now drove to part them: well he knew

He too might hang, if murder should ensue

Unluckily he fell; and in the fall

Snatched at the combatants: down tumbled all

Believed with mine and that his hanging had

And told about and round about the way

Their legs at length regained their place

For once transfixed with flames, those marks of woe

To the surrounding mob their men of war

Afforded inextinguishable light:

The rabble shouted, all St. Giles' street

That three such blackguards never met before



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## POSTSCRIPT.

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IT is much to be lamented that SCURRA did not bring the cause to a decision before the last scene took place, as that puts the whole matter at issue upon fresh ground. It must be acknowledged, however, that to move for a new trial was more in the regular course of legal practice.

I must honestly confess, had I been upon the Jury, with no other evidence before me than what then appeared, I should have found a verdict for PETER, without going out of Court. His coolness and intrepidity are admirable. He never suffers himself to be put in a passion; the more he is bespattered, the more cool and collected is he\*: were one of his eyes to be knocked out, he would.

\* The rencounter, which lately took place in Mr. WRIGHT's shop, by no means invalidates this opinion: *Eft modus in rebus, certi sunt denique fines.*

E

When



would still smile upon his adversary with the other. He carefully avoids, as much as possible, the saying vulgar truths, as that would betray a poverty of invention he is ashamed of. A deviation from this rule may, however, be occasionally dispensed with. Personal infirmities, for instance, a blackguard considers as fair game: but it is only a real genius in this way, who knows how "to snatch a grace beyond the reach of truth." What he cannot find he will impute. Thus, those happy allusions to the letter Z, *Æsop*, &c. and which he dwells upon with so much glee, I have doubly admired, since I learned that his opponent is in his person as rectilinear as *PETER* himself, though not so rotund; and that he resembles *Æsop* in nothing but the benevolence of his wit.

When the gentleman forgets himself, and puts on the blackguard, he is very properly turned out of company; and when the blackguard, with a like forgetfulness of character, assumes the infernal, no punishment can be too severe for him.

It is to be regretted that *PETER*'s indignation should so far have overpowered his prudence, as to precipitate him into the enemy's quarters; and it is still more to be regretted, that the catastrophe did not terminate with greater poetical justice. There was, it seems, but one broken pate; and the pate, too, which in this case ought to have escaped. Had *PETER*, indeed, hammered out the offender till he had been as straight as an arrow (supposing him, as *PETER* says, not so already), and as long as the Irish Giant, who would have wished to have rescued him from the anvil? And yet, he has conferred on *PETER* no inconsiderable obligation, having done for him that which *PETER* might had some difficulty in doing for himself: he has made him, by comparison, a respectable character.

He,



He, on the contrary, suffers himself to be provoked ; he lays his chief stress on those points which he has persuaded himself are true. From these, and some other circumstances, I was tempted to consider him as a mongrel half-educated blackguard. The Postscript, however, to the second edition of his Epistle to PETER has totally obliterated all ideas of that kind.

In a foul frenzy rolls the Blackguard's eye,  
As fancy bodies forth the unspecious lye,  
And gives the horrid negative of fame  
A local habitation and a name.

The insinuations the Postscript has conveyed are, indeed, conceived in the pure unadulterated spirit of blackguardism ; and the character to which, by implication, these insinuations are intended to attach, may be considered as a specimen of a new species of the sublime, compared to which, any thing that Billingsgate has hitherto produced is tameness and beggary. PETER, in this instance, at least, must bow to the predominating genius of his adversary, of whom, if he has any candour, he can do no less than pronounce, " he is himself the great sublime he draws."

But as it is my wish to hold the balance as evenly as I can between these Gentlemen (the reader will pardon so unjustifiable a catachresis), I feel it incumbent upon me to observe, that the



principal tropes and figures, with which this exquisite Postscript is so lavishly adorned, are not of English growth, but have been introduced into this country, only within these few years, by the visitors from a neighbouring Republic. These polished sojourners apply them only to colloquial purposes. It was reserved for the daring genius of the author of the Baviad, actuated, no doubt, by the improving spirit of an Englishman, to give them classical currency.

And here I cannot but remark, if the residence of a few wretched emigrants has already added so much to the purity of our ideas, and the energies of our language, what improvements might not have been expected, had not the narrow policy of our Government prohibited the free importation of all the principles and practices of that refined and delicate people? Until that fortunate period shall take place, when we may look for this restriction being taken off, I would propose that an Institution, the present fashionable mode of communicating valuable knowledge, should be established, either in Mr. WRIGHT's shop, or any other convenient place, where these beautiful exotics might be regularly and scientifically engrafted into the infant minds of the rising generation. This precaution would operate something like the inoculation of the cow-pox; it would totally eradicate every apprehension of danger or contamination from any other source.

Having



Having so far done *Æsop* justice, it will not, I hope, be thought detracting from his merit to say, that the modern *Pindar*, at least, he does not understand. It will require neither the talents of Mr. A. Mr. B. nor Mr. C. to prove the truth of this assertion. The reader must not, therefore, expect I shall attempt to amuse him with the facetious equivoques of Mr. A.; the learning and paradoxes of Mr. B.; nor yet that I should be still more paradoxical, though unlearned, like Mr. C.: my proofs shall be clear and incontrovertible.

Is there any one character, in all the writings of *Peter*, which, taken literally, bears the least resemblance to its respective original? No. What then do the sound laws of just criticism require of us, but to take that in a figurative sense, which is unintelligible, or has no rational meaning, in a literal one?

Here, then, is the true *Clavis Pindarica*, the key which at once unlocks all the recondite meanings, and hitherto unnoticed beauties, of this fascinating author.

The figure *Peter* confines himself to is, what I remember being taught at school to call, oxymoron, putting bitter for sweet, bitterer for sweeter, bitterest for sweetest. Observe his nice discrimination. He never throws about his praise at random; where he means

to



to deal out but a small portion of it, he is merely bitter; gradually increasing in bitterness and acerbity in proportion to the worth and virtues of those on whom they are to be bestowed. And on no one has he bestowed a greater share of this refined and delicate oil of flattery than on himself; which has flowed down from his beard, even to the skirts of his clothing. What stronger proof, then, can there be that he is, perhaps, the most amiable and virtuous character in being, the grand exemplar and ornament of the age in which he lives? So convinced am I, indeed, of this truth, that I have no doubt, were we to penetrate into the recesses of his domestic privacy, we should find him, not what the world ignorantly supposes he meant to have described himself, a licentious unprincipled profligate, given up to every species of wickedness and mischief; but, on the contrary, a most respectable, grave, benevolent, and venerable old man; punctual and exemplary in the performance of every duty, moral or religious. How edifying would it be to have the opportunity of contemplating that sedate, solemn, sanctimonious deportment, which, as I observed before, I have no doubt he regularly exhibits in private, and with as much sincerity, and consequently as much credit to himself, as many dignified characters unostentatiously display a like demeanour to the public observation and astonishment of the world!

T H E E N D.

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